

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE

May 2017

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program update provides a summary of significant activities of the State Water Board and the Central Valley Water Board. Next month's report will present activities of the North Coast, San Francisco Bay, Central Coast, Los Angeles, Colorado River, Lahontan, Santa Ana, and San Diego Water Boards.

STATE WATER BOARD

On May 2, 2017, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program staff (staff) participated in a conference call hosted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency Office of Water to solicit feedback on reducing or realigning regulatory requirements. Participants were concerned reducing regulations would negatively impact environmental protections.

On May 5, 2017, staff met with Fee Unit staff and representatives from the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition to discuss the fee schedule and potential alternatives.

On May 9, 2017, staff met with the California Agricultural Partnership Forum to discuss ongoing development of a framework to promote agricultural-related water quality improvement demonstration projects.

On May 10, 2017, staff participated in a California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment meeting. Items discussed included developing the key message for a statement on the Farm Bill and developing an understanding of positive and negative perceptions of agriculture to encourage the industry to increase awareness of its role in California's quality of life. The meeting included a tour of a cherry orchard to demonstrate how California agriculture is responding to changes in labor, including food safety, mechanization, and agricultural viability.

On May 12, 2017, staff participated in an Environmental Stewardship Tour in Hughson hosted by the Almond Board of California to better understand the complexities of the almond industry.

On May 16, 2017, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and Nonpoint Source Program staff participated in a Natural Resources Conservation Services State Technical Advisory Committee meeting to discuss allocation of 2018 Farm Bill funds. The anticipated future impact to Farm Bill funding based on anticipated Trump Administration budget cuts was included in the discussion; \$1.5 million was maintained in the 2018 Farm Bill for National Water Quality Initiative Projects in California.

On May 17, 2017, staff participated in a California Association of Pest Control Advisers and Certified Crop Advisers Board of Directors meeting to discuss budget issues and the addition of the State Agronomist to the Board of Directors.

On May 18, 2017, staff attended a public meeting of the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel, hosted by California Department of Farming and Agriculture, to present public comments received on and programmatic framework for the Healthy Soils Program. Public comments focused on the incentives program, funding, scoring criteria, eligibility, and roles of non-profit organizations.

On May 24, 2017, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and Nonpoint Source staff participated in a webinar sponsored by the American Farmland Trust and World Resources Institute. The webinar focused on a report on Water Quality Success Stories that featured lessons learned from six "Water Quality Targeting Success Stories." The projects used in-stream and tile drain monitoring to detect water quality improvements attributable to farm conservation practices adopted in the watersheds. Successful projects were found in California, Oklahoma, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Indiana. California's Walker Creek Project achieved three years of no Chlorpyrifos pesticide exceedances, thereby complying with state regulations for irrigated cropland.

On May 31, 2017, staff participated in California Bioresources Alliance steering committee meeting to continue planning the annual symposium scheduled for November 1 – 2, 2017, to be held in Sacramento.

REGIONAL WATER BOARD

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) staff holds quarterly stakeholder meetings to provide an open forum for communication between staff, agricultural coalitions, environmental justice groups, and other interested parties in Central Valley Region. The April 12, 2017 stakeholder meeting focused on surface water management plans. The July 12, 2017 meeting will focus on the revised draft State Water Resources Control Board Order on the petition of the East San Joaquin River General Order and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program-related requirements in the Confined Bovine Feeding Operations General Order.

On June 8, 2017, the Central Valley Water Board will hear an information item on the Management Practices Evaluation Program (MPEP). Through the MPEP, protective management practices for specific crops and site conditions will be identified. The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program General Orders require that these practices be implemented by growers whose farms match the crop type and site conditions for which they are shown to be effective.

Central Valley Water Board staff concentrated efforts on agricultural parcel inspections, Water Code section 13260 Directives, Notices of Violation for failure to respond to a Water Code section 13260 Directive and failure to comply with Orders, Pre-Administrative Civil Liability Notification Letters, and Administrative Civil Liability Complaints.

Additional information can be found at the following link:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/index.shtml